

The Tempest

Beginning and issues

First appearances.

The Tempest stands first in the 1623 Folio of Shakespeare's works. It has been taken to imply that the play is an epitome of Shakespeare's career; that it was Shakespeare's valediction to the stage and his last play; that it was the truest expression of Shakespeare's own feelings, and that in the magician-poet Prospero he depicted himself.

Another historical fact has conditioned views of the play in this century. The two earliest surviving records of productions are of performances at court. 'Hallowmas nyght' was presented at Whitehall before the kinges Maiestie a play Called the Tempest', and a year and a half later the play appears in a list of fourteen performances at court during the festive season proceeding the marriage of James I's daughter Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine. These records, have seemed to many modern critics to link *The Tempest* specifically with the Jacobean court.

These inferences have so conditioned recent views of the play that it will be as well to deal with them at the outset. Dryden, completing Davenant's revision of *The Tempest* for the Restoration stage, describes it as having been a Blackfriars play. The fact of a court performance need to even indicate that the play was new to the company's repertoire in that season, though we can say on the basis of other evidence that this was the case with *The Tempest*. That a play was presented at court on a particular occasion may indicate that it was chosen for its appropriateness, or that it was revised to suit the occasion. *The Tempest* can be shown to have strong affinities with Hallowmas, the occasion of its first recorded court performance, but if we wish to argue its special relevance to Princess Elizabeth's wedding we must deal with the thirteen other plays presented along with it: like *Othello* and *The Maid's Tragedy*, among a miscellany defying easy categorization.

The only conclusion one can draw from this evidence is that plays were considered appropriate entertainments for weddings. Even the presence of a masque is no evidence that a courtly venue was intended, and in this case it may imply just the reverse: the mechanics of the masque and the apparitions in *The Tempest* are those of the public theatre not of the Banqueting House, with its changeably scenery.

Not only *The Tempest*, but all three plays were performed in the Banqueting House. The fact of a performance there tells us no more about this play, or the conditions of its production, than it tells us about any of the others. We have a precisely analogous case in *Othello*, the first recorded performance of which took place in the Banqueting House in 1604: this does not imply that *Othello* was thought to be particularly masque-like. Indeed, there was not even any necessary association between the Banqueting House and theatrical

entertainments, to say nothing of masques. The Banqueting House became a place of high decorum in later years.

The Genre.

Modern criticism has removed *The Tempest* from its place as the first of the comedies, and has invented for it, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline* and *Pericles* the category of romance. Modern conceptions of genre are not those of the Renaissance. To find a new category for a play was not to abandon the old ones.

We have invented the category of romance because we believe that certain kinds of seriousness are inappropriate to comedy and because we are made uncomfortable by the late plays' commitment to non-realistic modes. We have, thereby, unquestionably, shed light on the relations between *The Tempest* and three other late plays, but we have also thereby obscured *The Tempest's* relation to the rest of Shakespearean comedy.

The play is as much concerned with tragic as with comic themes: the nature of authority and power; the conflicting claims of vengeance and forgiveness, of justice and mercy; the realities of reconciliation and the possibility of regeneration. In its concern with political legitimacy and the effects of usurpation, the play reconsiders issues that had occupied Shakespeare's mind from the earliest history plays to *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. The fact that it centres as well on a happy betrothal has tended to obscure for us its insistent concern with the dangerous potential of sexuality and the uncertain future that marriage represents.

Readings and Interpretations.

The generic issues are related to questions of character, because in large measure the play contains and controls its tragic potential through the figure of Prospero. As the text presents him, Prospero is a complex, erratic, and even contradictory figure, though criticism has not invariably seen him as such. The eighteen century's attitude was for whom the play seemed 'as perfect in its kind as almost anything we have' of Shakespeare's, and Prospero's magic had 'something in it very solemn and poetical'. Charles Gildon, in 1710, saw Prospero as almost too serene and untroubled. He conceded that Prospero's account of his past to Miranda 'may seem a little too calm, and that it had been more Dramatic had it been told in a Passion; but if we consider ... the Story as Prospero tells it, [it] is not without a *Pathos*'. Hogarth's extraordinary painting of c. 1735-40 implies a similarly sentimental reading. Prospero, watches benignly as a courtly Ferdinand in ermine and gold embroidery salutes a classically draped Miranda, a magic book at her feet and a garlanded lamb at her side. Ariel hovers above and Caliban, bearing logs, is apparently oblivious to the fact that he is crushing one of a pair of linked doves beneath his webbed foot.

Wives and Mothers.

The drama that Prospero recounts is a family drama; but it is one with a significant absence: the wife and mother. The context implies that women as a class are not, and were it not for her word, Miranda's legitimacy would be in doubt. The legitimacy of Prospero's heir, derives from her mother's word. But that word is all that is required of her in the play; once it has been supplied, Prospero's attention turns to himself and his succession.

Except for this moment, Prospero's wife is absent from his memory. Miranda can recall several women who attended her in childhood, but no mother. But the absent presence of the wife and mother constitutes a space that is filled, for Prospero, with surrogates and a ghostly family: the witch Sycorax and her monster child Caliban the usurping younger brother Antonio; the good child-wife Miranda, the obedient Ariel, the adolescent and libidinous Ferdinand.

Indeed, Prospero presents his voyage to the island as a way of starting life over again and in one extraordinary passage conceives his suffering as a literal childbirth. He has reconceived himself, as Miranda's only parent, but also as the family's favourite child. This has the shape of a Freudian fantasy. He has been banished by his wicked, usurping, possibly illegitimate younger brother Antonio: the younger brother is the usurper in the family. On the island Prospero undoes the usurpation, recreating kingdom and family with himself in sole command.

But not quite, because the island is not his alone. When he arrives he finds Caliban, child of the witch Sycorax. In Prospero's account, Sycorax was the embodiment of wickedness, but her history is curiously parallel with his. She, too, was a victim of banishment, and the island provided a new life for her, as it did literally for her son. Like Prospero, she made Ariel her servant, and controlled the natural spirits of the island. Sycorax died some time before Prospero's arrival; Prospero never saw her. Nevertheless, she is insistently present in his memory and she embodies to an extreme degree all the negative assumption about women that he and Miranda have exchanged.

On the surface, Prospero and Sycorax are antitheses. But, the similarities between the two sorcerors grow increasingly marked. Sycorax was possessed by 'unmitigable rage'; she kept Ariel in bondage, and ultimately penned the spirit up in a cloven pine, from which even her own magic was not powerful enough to release him. From Caliban's point of view, Prospero looks very much like Sycorax.

Magic.

The ambiguities of feeling about magic in the play are a very clear index to its openness. From one aspect, Prospero's art is Baconian science and Neoplatonic philosophy, the empirical study of nature leading to the understanding and control of all its forces.

In the *Magnalia Natura*, Bacon promised the power to raise storms at will, to control the seasons, to accelerate germination and harvest: in this context,

both the opening scene and Prospero's masque constitute a scientific fantasy, marvellous, but not as all inconsistent with reason and virtue.

Royal science represents one aspect of Prospero's magic. Another is less solemn: it is theatre, illusionism, the unserious delight implied in Prospero's characterization of his masque as 'Some vanity of mine art' (4.1.41). A darker side is expressed by Prospero himself when he blames his philosophical pursuits for his dereliction of duty; in this view, magic is not a source of power but a retreat from it. James himself would have concurred: for all his pride in his scholarship, he distrusted studiousness in monarchs.

The darkest view of magic is summed up in the figure of Sycorax, that ghostly memory so intensely present in the play, the perverse, irrational, violent, malicious, vindictive principle in nature, progenitor of monsters, lover and agent of the devil on earth.

Attitude toward magic in the play range from the most positive to the most negative. Recent criticism has tended to emphasize the tradition of the virtuous mage to the exclusion of everything else. To view the action of *The Tempest* as depicting Prospero's ascent up a Neoplatonic ladder is to ignore the host of ambivalence and qualifications that are continually expressed about both the central figure and his art. The battle between Prospero and Sycorax is Prospero's battle with himself, and by the play's end he has accepted the witch's monstrous offspring as his own: 'this thing of darkness I Acknowledge mine' (5.1.275-6).

Caliban.

The inner conflict is reflected in the dramatic tension between Prospero and Caliban. In Prospero's account, there is nothing goof about Caliban; if the savage is born to servitude, he is not even a good servant. Prospero's attempt to educate and civilize him have only succeeded in corrupting him. He suffers terribly at his master's hands, but he learns nothing from his suffering. When Miranda charges him with ingratitude, he replies, 'You taught me language, and my profit on't| Is I know how to curse'. The remark succinctly expresses Prospero's view of Caliban.

But we hear much than curses in Caliban's language. He has a rich and sensuous apprehension of nature, and a imaginative power that is second only to Prospero's. Caliban represents a striking failure of Prospero's art; not his only failure but the only failure he acknowledges in the play.

Caliban also represents a significant counter-claim to Prospero's authority. The island is rightly his, and Prospero is an invader and usurper. Caliban is not presented as a noble savage, and his immediate attachment to Stephano is sufficient to confirm Prospero's view of him as a natural servant.

It is possible to see in this corrupt behaviour the consequences of Caliban's experience with Prospero. In this line of argument, the relation of master and servant, European and native, is modelled on the colonial experience. And in

fact, if the dramatic action seems to trivialize the question of Caliban's proper status, the philosophical and legal aspects of his claim to the island have a good deal of resonance throughout the play. They bear not only on the question of Caliban's rights but even more significantly on the nature and sources of Prospero's authority. In a significant tell his master that 'I am all the subjects that you have' (1.2.341), he reminds us that authority may claim to derive from heaven, but in practice it depends on the acquiescence.

Aristocracies require proletariats; hierarchies need people at the bottom as well as at the top. There is a great deal of physical labour to be done on the island, and, only Caliban can be made to do it. Caliban himself complicates an initially simple issue by deriving his claim from inheritance. He need to do this. This would have been the basis of Sycorax's claim were she to have made one, but it is an argument that Caliban never uses. And in deriving his authority from his mother, he delivers himself into Prospero's hands; for if it is true, as Prospero says, that Caliban is a bastard.

But is it true that Caliban is Sycorax's bastard by Satan? Or is this merely more of Prospero's invective, an extreme instance of his characteristic assumptions about women? Nothing in the text will answer this question for us. There is a paradigm in this for the play as a whole: its realities throughout are largely the products of Prospero's imagination, or of the imaginative recreation of his memory. 'Facts' have a tendency to appear and disappear as Antonio's son does, in a way that defeats any attempt to find in the play a firm history or a consistent world.

Caliban's name seems to be related to Carib, 'a fierce nation of the West Indies, from which 'cannibal' derives; and Caliban may be intended as an anagram of cannibal. But criticism has generally seen much more in Caliban than Prospero does. But the view of Caliban as a familiar European wild man or wodewose is symptomatic of a widespread critical attempt that is prompted by the play itself, to humanize and domesticate Caliban, to rescue him from Prospero's view of him – to succeed with him where Prospero has failed. The stage tradition has presented him more often as clownish than frightening, thereby implicitly undercutting the seriousness of Prospero's fears and invective.

Caliban has generally been seen as a foil to Ariel and Prospero confirms his servant's place in an elemental hierarchy by referring to him as 'earth' (1.2.314). both long for freedom, and while only Ariel is offered the hope of obtaining it, in fact both Prospero's servants receive it at the same time, when Prospero resumes his dukedom at the play's end. In contrast to Caliban's elemental sameness, Ariel is volatile and metamorphic. He is male, the asexual boy to Caliban's libidinous man, but all the roles he plays at Prospero's command are female: sea nymph, harpy, Ceres.

In the dramatic structure of the play, Caliban is even more significantly contrasted with Miranda. The two children have been educated together on the island; Miranda has developed into a wonder of civilized grace, Caliban

into a surly, malicious and a lustful monster. Prospero concludes that Caliban is monstrous by nature; but once again the issue is complicated by Prospero's and Miranda's claim that they have taught Caliban everything he knows, and by the clear parallel in Prospero's mind between Caliban and the other wicked child for whose education he claims responsibility, his younger brother Antonio.

Suitors and Rapists.

Caliban, like Sycorax, does in fact embody a whole range of qualities that we see in Prospero, but that he consistently denies in himself: rage, passion, vindictiveness; perhaps deepest and most disruptive, sexuality. Theatrically and critically, the most troublesome aspects of the magician's character have been those relating to libidinous energy. Prospero's charge of ingratitude against Caliban, and Miranda's startling denunciation of him, are provoked by the recollection of an attempt by Caliban to rape Miranda.

Caliban's is not only dangerous sexuality to be feared in the play. Prospero's repeated warnings to Ferdinand against pre-marital sex are not prompted by anything we see of Ferdinand's behaviour. Caliban is nay man who takes an interest in Miranda, even the suitor of Prospero's choice.

The ambivalence towards Ferdinand is expressed, too, in the tasks Prospero sets for him, Caliban's tasks. Prospero later apologizes for 'too austerely' punishing Ferdinand, but leaves the young man's offence unexplained.

The crimes Prospero charges Ferdinand with in this strange moment are those of his brother Antonio: usurpation and treason.

The resolution Prospero undertakes to provide for the play's tragic tensions are the traditional ones of comedy: forgiveness of injuries. He is unambiguously successful in producing only the third of these; but even here, the promised end is neither easy to come by nor the union of innocents we have been led to expect. He interrupts his celebratory masque with the recollection of another conspiracy against his throne and his life.

The Renaissance political context

Political Marriages.

The shipwreck engineered by Prospero brings to the island, both explicitly and by implication, the world of Renaissance politics. In the context provided by Alonso, Gonzalo, Antonio, and Sebastian, family quarrels are public policies, private motives become matters of state. These Italian rules are returning from the wedding of Alonso's daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis. That wedding in the play's background is very different from the happy union of Ferdinand and Miranda; but both are affairs of state, and the account we are given of Claribel's fate comes immediately after Miranda's first meeting with the man her father has chosen as her husband.

The betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda is an essential element of the broader reconciliation towards which the play strives. The disarming of traditional enemies through marriage in the next generation is not only a comic convention; it is a piece of Renaissance statecraft. Throughout Shakespeare's lifetime the *politique* marriage seemed the likeliest mean of resolving the European power struggles, whether, through the union of Huguenot and Catholic, Tudor to Philip II of Spain, and of James's daughter to the Protestant Prince Frederick, through a consolidation of power. Marriages of reconciliation, of the sort represented by that of Ferdinand and Miranda, were, not popular in England. Nevertheless, King James had similar plans for both Prince Henry and Princess Elizabeth: their hands were in his gift; and, despite his assertion in *Basilicon Doron*, James was quite clear about the fact that to marry his children to Protestants would have been a waste of good diplomatic currency. At the time of Prince's death in 1612, James was negotiating for both the French Princess Christine and a Princess of Savoy; Princess Elizabeth's marriage to the Prince of Piedmont was to be a part of the latter bargain. Henry was a militant Protestant. Nevertheless, he assured his father of his conviction that it was 'for your Majesty to resolve what course is most convenient to be taken by the rules of State', merely observing that 'my part to play, which is to be in love with any of them, is not yet at hand'.

Utopia and the New World.

Gonzalo's Utopian fantasy brings into the play a whole range of Renaissance thought about the relation of Europeans to newly discovered lands and to their native populations. This matter would have been especially timely in 1611 because of the recent formation of the Virginia Company, established by royal charter in 1606. The results of this undertaking were little short of disastrous; and at least one episode in the voyage seems to have provided Shakespeare with material for *The Tempest*: during a hurricane near the Virginia coast, the governor's ship was separated from the rest of the fleet, and was driven to Bermuda.

The larger question of the relevance of exploration narratives to *The Tempest*, and of the Virginia Company pamphlets in particular, has been energetically argued since Malone first called attention to them in 1808. Most critics are agreed that at least some of the literature relating to the New World is somewhere behind the play, though E.E. Stoll dismissed the whole matter categorically.

It is not true that 'the still-vexed Bermudas' is the only allusion in the play to the New World. Caliban's god Setebos was a Patagonian deity; the name appears in account of Magellan's voyages, and is clear evidence that the American were in Shakespeare's mind when he was inventing his islander.

Certain elements of the play relate to a New-World topos persisting from earliest accounts until well into the seventeenth century. Cannibalism, Utopia, and free love reappear throughout the century as defining elements of New-World societies. Cannibalism especially became part of the standard

iconography of American. If Shakespeare were looking for accounts of New-World natives, an obvious place for him to turn would be to an essay on cannibals. We know he did in fact turn to Montaigne's, where he found the other elements of the *topos* as well: that the natives have a Utopian government and sanction adultery. The latter observation is especially relevant, because the practice of free love in the New World is regularly treated not as an instance of the lust of savages; and it may help to explain why Caliban is not only unrepentant for his attempt on Miranda, but incapable of seeing that there is anything to repent for.

But the age's view of the relation of the new to the old world goes deeper than this: it is historical and typological as well. When Thomas Harriot published his account of his voyage to Virginia, he included as an appendix a set of engravings of the ancient Britons, 'for to show', he explains, 'how that the inhabitants of the Great Britain have been in times past as savage as those of Virginia'.

Caliban has almost nothing in common with the prelapsarian savages described in Montaigne's essay 'Of the Cannibals'. He owes more to concepts of the natural depravity of New-World populations. In Montaigne, on the contrary, it is the Europeans who are predatory and savage; Shakespeare dramatizes both sides of the debate, and in the process renders a resolution to it impossible. Montaigne's point in introducing Plato's ideal republic is that they would have to abandon their Utopian fantasies: New-World natives have created an ideal community that outdoes Plato's imagined one. But Caliban provides no counter-argument to Gonzalo's fantasy. Shakespeare has taken everything from Montaigne except the point.

Authority.

Gonzalo's Utopian is native and self-contradictory, as the pragmatists in Alonso's party are quick to observe.

Nevertheless, Caliban's accusations against Prospero of usurpation and enslavement reveal an unexpected solidity. Few Renaissance theorists considered the claims of native populations seriously, and Prospero does not undertake to refute Caliban's charges. He assumes his authority, and rules by virtue of his ability to do so.

What is the nature of Prospero's authority and the source of his power? Why is he Duke of Milan and the legitimate ruler of the island? Power, is not inherited but self-created: it is magic and the authority legitimizing it derives from heaven. It is Caliban who derives his claim to the island from inheritance, from his mother.

In the England of 1610, both these positions represent available, and indeed normative ways of conceiving of royal authority. James I's authority derived, both from his mother and from God. But deriving one's legitimacy from Mary Queen of Scots was an ambiguous claim at best. Elizabeth had had similar problems with the sources of her own authority, and they centred precisely on

the question of her legitimacy. To those who believed that her father's divorce from Katherine of Aragon was invalid Elizabeth had no hereditary claim. Henry VIII maintained Elizabeth's bastardy to the end. Prospero at last acknowledging the bastard Caliban as his own is also expressing the double edge of kingship throughout Shakespeare's lifetime. Historically speaking, Caliban's claim to the island is a good one.

Royal power is good when it is self-created. But of course the least problematic case of royal descent is one that is not represented in these paradigms at all, one that derives not from the mother but in the male line from the father: the case of Ferdinand and Alonso, in which the wife and mother is totally absent. If we are thinking about the *derivation* of royal authority, the, the absence of a father from Prospero's memory is a great deal more significant than the disappearance of a wife. This has been dealt with in psychoanalytic terms, whereby Antonio becomes a stand-in for the father, the real usurper of the mother's kingdom. James in fact had a double claim to the English throne, and the one through his father, the Earl of Darnley. Both Darnley and Mary were direct descendants of Henry VII, but under Henry VIII's will, which established the line of succession, descendants who were not English-born were specifically excluded.

King James rarely mentioned this side of his heritage, for perfectly understandable reasons. His father was even more disreputable than his mother; and it was all too easy to speculate about whether Darnley was in fact his father. For James, the derivation of authority through paternity was extremely problematic. In practical terms, James's claim to the English throne depended on Elizabeth *naming* him her heir, and James correctly saw this as a continuation of the protracted negotiations between Elizabeth and his mother. His legitimacy, in both senses, thus derives from two mothers, the chaste Elizabeth and the sensual Mary. James's sense of his own place in the kingdom is that of Prospero, rigidly paternalistic, but incorporating the maternal as well: the King describes himself in *Basilicon Doron* as 'a loving nourish-milk'. The very etymology of the word authority confirms the metaphor: *augeo*, increase, nourish, cause to grow. In the world of *The Tempest*, there are no two-parent families. All the dangers of promiscuity and bastardy are resolved in such a conception.

Epic and History

Italy and Carthage.

Dynastic issues and questions of royal authority have an epic as well as a political dimension in the play. In particular, allusions to and echoes of the *Aeneid* are insistent in *The Tempest*. Kermode records his conviction that 'Shakespeare has Virgil in mind'. The most suggestive studies are those of J.M. Nosworthy, Jan Kott, John Pitcher, and Robert Wiltenburg, all of whom find Virgil's influence pervasive and see the meaning of the play as controlled by Shakespeare's response to the *Aeneid*.

Wilterburg gives the most tactful statement of the argument, and concurs that 'the *Aeneid* is the main source of the play in this sense, not the source of the plot...but the work to which Shakespeare is responding, the story he is retelling'. There are certainly obvious points of contact between the *Aeneid* and *The Tempest*. Ferdinand react to his first sight of Miranda with Aeneas' words on seeing Venus, 'o dea certe'; Ceres welcoming Iris in the masque (4.1.76-8) appropriates a Virgilian description of the goddess; Gonzalo, Antonio, and Sebastian, in an exchange that has proved baffling to editors, invoke 'widow Dido' and 'widower Aeneas' and argue over whether Tunis and Carthage are the same place (2.1.75-86); Ariel and his spirits appearing as harpies at Alonso's banquet are re-enacting a Virgilian episode; and if we have Virgil in mind, several other less explicit parallels will suggest themselves. The heroic, with its overtones of the tragic, is a clear strain in the play, and some of its particularly is provided by Virgilian echoes and allusions. The geographical world in which the play is located its largely that of the *Aeneid*: Alonso's shipwreck interrupts a voyage retracing Aeneas', from Carthage to Naples.

As for the notorious exchange about widow Dido, it has proved baffling only because editors and critics have limited their attention to Virgil. From antiquity until well into the seventeenth century there were two traditions concerning Dido. In the older, which was considered the historical one, she was a princess of Tyre married to her uncle Sychaeus, a priest of Hercules. Her brother Pygmalion, the tyrant of Tyre, murdered her husband for his enormous wealth, and she fled by ship, taking with her both his gold and a ground of discontented noblemen. On Cyprus she collected fifty women. Dido then sailed to North Africa, where through a combination of shrewd bargaining and deceptiveness she obtained the land to found Carthage. She was an exemplary ruler, famous for her chastity and her devotion to the memory of her murdered husband. She committed suicide to prevent her forced marriage to a local king.

It is Virgil who introduces Aeneas into the legend. Later commentators generally account for the transformation as Virgil's way of explaining the traditional enmity between Carthage and Rome. In antiquity both Macrobius and Servius rejected the historicity of the Virgilian story, and the Church Fathers regularly treated Dido as a prot-Christian for her absolute fidelity to her marriage vows.

George Sandys, summarizes the tradition in which Shakespeare was working. Regarding Virgil's Dido, he writes that 'other upon better grounds have determined that this was merely a fiction of Virgil's, and that Aeneas never came thither', and he translates an epigram of Ausonius on Dido.

English writers found in her a easy analogue for Elizabeth. 'Dido' is an epithet applied to her after her death, usually explained as meaning 'valiant'.

This is the heroic and moral tradition that Gonzalo is invoking in his comparison of Claribel to 'widow Dido'. The cynical Antonio and Sebastian

undercut the allusion by invoking the alternative tradition in which Dido abandons her chastity to an equally unchaste 'widower Aeneas': there are many sympathetic readings to the Virgilian episode in the period, but there was no getting around the fact that Virgil's Dido ends as a fallen woman, conscious of her sin, betrayed and abandoned.

Antonio's cynical reading of the Dido story, however, also points away from the classical and heroic and towards Elizabethan assumptions about Renaissance Italy: the Machiavellian and diabolical figure as largely in the world of the play as the noble and philosophical.

The Masque

Jacobean Court Spectacles.

Prospero's masque for his daughter's betrothal constitutes the prime example we are shown of his art. The masque is a assertion of princely power: the art that raised the tempest and sent ominous apparitions in its victims is presented now in its ceremonial and celebratory mode.

By 1611, the King's Men would have had a good deal of direct experience with court masques. Since James's accession, Whitehall had seen eleven such productions: eight by Jonson, two by Daniel; and one by Campion. To view Prospero's masque in the context of Whitehall's Christmas festivities requires some caution: the masque in *The Tempest* is not a court masque, it is a dramatic allusion to one, and it functions in the structure of the drama not as a separable interlude but as an integral part of the action. Nevertheless, it is Shakespeare's most significant essay in this courtly genre, and we must look at it in that light as well.

The Jacobean masque was largely the creation of one poet. It undertakes to lead the court to its goal self through a combination of satire, exhortation, and praise. The monarch is always its centre, and even in cases where Queen Anne or Prince Henry is the nominal protagonist, it is always made clear that the force animating the idealizing vision is the king. Thus at New Year's Day 1611, the court saw, in *Oberon*, a group of satyrs won away from the pleasures of drinking and making love to the virtues embodied in the masque's eponymous hero. The fact that the satyrs' pleasures are the traditional courtly ones is part of Jonson's point: the masque is mimetic as well as celebratory.

The movement is characteristically Jonsonian, but its relevance to the idealizing aspects of Shakespeare's vision in *The Tempest* is self-evident. Jonson's masques are always about the resolution of conflict, personified, in clear symbolic figures: the lustful satyrs and obedient fairies of *Oberon*; the maleficent witches banished by the heroic queens of *The Masque of Queens*; the sphinx of Ignorance set against Love, witty and ingenious in *Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly*; the humours and affections tamed by Reason in *Hymenaei*; or simply, the basic antithesis of Blackness and Beauty. These works also celebrate power in the state. The light of the royal presence turns the Ethiops of *The Masque of Blackness* white; the union of bride and groom

in *Hymenaei* mirrors the uniting of the two kingdoms of England and Scotland through the new sovereign; ecc.

As the move from conflict to harmony is central to the action of the masque, so antithesis is basic to its structure. Jonson did not produce his first fully imagined antimasque until *The Masque of Queens* in 1609, with its opening scene of witches in a hell elaborately realized by Inigo Jones, but the concept of a structural device embodying whatever opposes or threatens the world of courtly virtue was implicit in the form from the beginning not only exquisite and monstrous, grateful and ungrateful, but also air and earth.

The Tempest as a whole has certain obvious qualities in common with the masque as Jonson was developing it. The court audience at Hallowmas 1611 had already seen infernal sorcery superseded by royal virtue in *The Masque of Queens*; in the first two months of 1611, they saw ignorance and envy defeated by learning and love in *Love Freed*, and licentiousness curbed and brought to the service of a noble intelligence in *Oberon*. Moreover Jonson's wedding masque *Hymenaei* provided Shakespeare with a structural principle based on the Pythagorean canon of harmonic proportion. Prospero's masque may also owe something of Campion's wedding masque for Lord Hay. But the relationship of the Shakespearean masque to the court masques that followed it is more interesting; for the masque of Ceres, Iris and Juno anticipates important elements of the form in the next decade. That there are ambivalences of feeling about all this in *The Tempest* goes without saying – there are powerful ambivalences in Jonson, too, though they are probably not the same ones. It is clear that Prospero is not the ideal ruler required by the harmonious vision that is so often summoned up in the play. If James, too, was not the unmoved mover that Jonson's vision demanded, the poet could at least believe in the power of philosophy and verse to show the king his true place and what he had to be to occupy it. There was, no doubt, for Jonson, a comfortable and probably a necessary fiction here; for the masque was at least as much the king's form as the poet's, and where we tend to see in it only annual compliments to the monarchy, James would have seen it as just the opposite. It was his own annual celebration of his authority, his assertion of his will, and his realization of his sense of his place in the commonwealth, and in the universe. In Prospero's masque, the vision of a royal dramaturge, Shakespeare is responding to something new in English society, and quintessentially Jacobean.

The Masque as Image and Symbol.

Prospero the illusionist presents in the betrothal masque is own version of Gonzalo's Utopia, a vision of orderly nature and bountiful fruition. The performance opens with benign deities, Iris and Ceres. If we miss an antimasque, the drama itself has provided several. Prospero in his fierce preliminary charge to Ferdinand invokes a trio of maleficent personifications attendant on unchaste behaviour.

Ferdinand's reassuring reply banishes these antimasque figures so that the masque can begin.

Two other prime instances of Prospero's art, the opening storm and the harpies' banquet, may also be seen as antimasques to the magician's entertainment, and the figure of Iris is an appropriate exorcist for both. As the rainbow, she embodies, divine providence. As God's pledge to Noah after the universal flood, she demonstrate that 'Storms are the triumph of his art'.

Iris, bringing together Ceres and Juno to celebrate the royal betrothal, reconstitutes the fragmented world of the play. When earth is seen as Ceres, it is no longer intractable, but productive and nurturing. Even Prospero's libidinous fears are put to rest here: Iris assures Ceres that Venus and Cupid, have fled from the scene, confounded by the chaste vows of Ferdinand and Miranda.

Ceres brought civilization to human society. She presides here because Prospero's masque is a civilizing vision, and the fertility it invokes is a hunter and fisherman; the islander are sustained by wild things, and live as predators on nature. But the masque celebrates agriculture, and refers us to a sophisticated society. Ceres even remarks on 'this short-grassed green'. Within fifty lines, however, Ceres is invoking the full barns and garners of high summer; and shortly before Prospero stops the performance Iris summons 'sunburned sickle-men, of August weary'.

This entertainment is re-enacting central concerns of the play as a whole. It invokes a myth in which the crucial act of destruction is the rape of a daughter; it finds in the preservation of virginity the promise of civilization and fecundity. This is Prospero's vision, symbolically expressing how deeply the fears for Miranda's chastity are implicated with his sense of his own power, how critical an element she is in his plans for the future. But she is valuable to him, only so long as she remains a virgin. The underlying assumptions here are not unique to Prospero. They are implicit, too, for example, in Raleigh's selection of the name Virginia for his new colony.

But after autumn, what then? The drama in which Prospero performs is a series of crises; *tempestas*, the tempest of the title, has as its root *tempus*. Prospero's masque, in contrast, moves in an easy progression; and as its eros includes no lust, its natural cycle includes no winter. Ceres, indeed, makes this one of her gifts to the lovers.

This is the point at which Prospero interrupts his masque, and in so doing suddenly brings to it a recognition of what has been omitted from the vision of the ideal.

Critics have tended to underestimate the seriousness of this moment. The threat is less in the conspiracy itself than in Prospero's forgetfulness of it.

Renunciation and Resolution.

As Prospero present it, the resolution of the play depends on his willingness to perform several acts of renunciation, chief among which is the abandonment of his magic. The enchanter's powers are explicitly theatrical. He has at his command a troupe of actors headed by Ariel, and all the resources of the Jacobean stage (flying devices, trapdoors, ascents and descents etc.).

Except for the storm at the play's opening, Prospero's power is exemplified as power over people. It has been customary not only to talk about the magician as a Renaissance scientist, but to see alchemical metaphor in the grand design of the play. Does the magi work? We are shown a good deal of evidence of it: the masque, the banquet, the harpies, the tempest itself.

Why does Prospero declare himself satisfied with this conclusion? There is a strong sense of displacement here; and indeed, throughout the play Prospero's efforts have been much more powerfully directed towards Alonso than towards his brother. Nothing, can redeem Antonio from his essential badness; but the corollary to this is that Prospero's magic has not been employed to bring about the reform of Antonio. And since Shakespeare was free to have Antonio repent if that is what he had in mind, we ought to take seriously the possibility that that is not what he had in mind.

Why does Prospero renounce his magic? Most commentators explain that he gives up his power when he no longer needs it. To say that Prospero no longer *needs* magic is to beg all the most important questions. What does it mean to need magic? Did Prospero ever need it, and if so, why? And though he talks a good deal about renouncing it, does he in fact give up?

The play's attitudes towards magic are, as we have observed, profoundly ambivalent. Magic allies the enchanter with the forces of nature, with Fortune, Destiny, 'province divine'; but Prospero's devotion to his secret studies is also the source of all the discord in his nature. To say that he no longer needs magic is to say that his character changes in some way for the better; that, by relinquishing his special powers, he becomes at last fully human.

To renounce magic is also, to renounce vindictiveness and vengeance.

But is this in fact what happens at the end of the play? What does it mean for the magician to give up his power? Letting Miranda marry and leaving the island are the obvious answer, but they can hardly be right. Miranda's marriage is brought about by the magic; for all the evident pain of losing his daughter, her betrothal to Ferdinand is part of Prospero's plan.

Prospero promises to renounce his art in the great monologue at the beginning of Act 5. For all its valedictory quality, this is the most powerful assertion of his magic the play gives us. It is also a powerful literary allusion a close translation of a speech of Ovid's Medea, and it makes at least one claim for Prospero that is made nowhere else in the play: that he can raise the dead.

If it is an unambiguous promise, the move towards reconciliation is far less so. Alonso is welcomed, embraced, and forgiven in short order, but Antonio poses a greater problem. The crime that Prospero holds in reverse for later use against his brother is the attempted assassination of Alonso. The episode takes place at 2.1.183: Prospero has sent Ariel to put all the shipwreck victims to sleep except Antonio and Sebastian. Antonio then persuades Sebastian to murder Alonso and thereby become King of Naples.

The situation has been created by Prospero, and the murderous conspiracy is certainly part of his project – this is why Sebastian and Antonio are not put to sleep. So, at the play's end, Prospero still has usurpation and attempted murder to hold against his brother, things that still disqualify Antonio from his place in the family. The brothers remain natural and inveterate enemies. If we look again at that marriage as a political act, we will observe that, in order to establish the line of succession, Prospero is marrying his daughter to the son of his enemy. There is a good Renaissance statecraft in this. In the play's terms, it has curious implications. It has the virtue of excluding Antonio from any future claim on the ducal throne, but it also effectively disposes of the realm as political entity: if Miranda is the heir to the dukedom, Milan through the marriage will become part of the kingdom of Naples, not the other way round. The usurping Antonio stands condemned, but the effects of the usurpation, the alliance with Alonso and the reduction of Milan to a Neapolitan fiefdom are, through Miranda's wedding, confirmed and legitimized. Prospero has not really regained his lost dukedom – his 'dukedom yet unbowed': he has usurped his brother's. In this context Prospero's final assertion that 'Every third through shall be my grave' (5.1.311) may be something more than the simple acknowledgement of advancing age, a conventional *memento mori*. The remark is also a forecast of victory. If we look at the marriage in this way, giving away Miranda is as much a means of preserving Prospero's authority as of relinquishing it.

The interpretative issue here is not really why Prospero is incapable of being fully reconciled with his brother. On a much more basic level, it is why Shakespeare, having set up such clear expectations about the matter, was unwilling to have Antonio repent. Just as Prospero interrupts his masque because the idealizing vision not only misrepresents the reality of his drama but finally threatens it in the development of his comedy, increasingly finds the promised restorations and marriages of comic conclusions inadequate to reconcile the conflicts that comedy has generated.

Neat as its conclusion is, *The Tempest* in its final moments opens outwards. The lovers have each other, Prospero is the duke again, Alonso is repentant and forgiven, Antonio is, if not defeated, at least at bay, Caliban announces that he will 'seek for grace hereafter', and Ariel is free at last.

Prospero provides an epilogue that is in one respect unique in Shakespeare's drama. He declares himself not an actor in a play but a character in a fiction; and, instead of stepping out of character, he expands the fiction beyond the

limits of the drama. His charms 'are all o'erthrown'; but he is still able to invest his magical powers in the audience. The spells are now ours; we have become the enabling factor in the fiction. Our breath, not Ariel's, must send his ship back to Italy.

Text and Date

The text.

The earliest text of *The Tempest* is that of the 1623 Folio. It is clear text with very few obvious corruptions and with unusually elaborate stage directions. The latter two points have led scholars to the conclusion that the printers' copy for the play was a manuscript prepared by the scrivener Ralph Crane. Crane was employed from time to time by the King's Men to make transcripts of plays. A number of these survive. We have a good deal of evidence about Crane's methods and characteristics, though it is evidence that has as yet been only partially evaluated. Crane also prepared the Folio copy for *Two Gentlemen*, *Merry Wives*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Winter's Tale*. The most thorough study of Crane's role in the preparation of copy for the First Folio is T. H. Howard-Hill's *Ralph Crane and Some Shakespeare First Folio Comedies*.

Sr Walter Greg, was summing up two decades of scholarly opinion when he asserted that 'Crane's transcript was clearly made from the author's original'.

Roberts believes it most likely, that the printer was working from a copy prepared by Crane specifically for publication. Editorial studies of the play in recent years have focused particularly on the stage directions.

Roberts compares the stage directions with those in Crane's transcriptions of *A Game at Chess*, and concludes that they are not inconsistent with accounts of a production. The most thorough examination of the question as a whole is John Jowett's 'New Created Creatures: Ralph Crane and the Stage Directions in *The Tempest*', *Shakespeare Survey* 36, pp. 107-20.

The fact that *The Tempest* is placed first in the Folio has figured significantly in a variety of critical speculations, but the bibliographical evidence will lend little support to any of them. The relation between Crane's text and the work of the compositors has received a good deal of study. It is clear that compositors varied in the degree to which they followed the accidentals and the arrangement of text in their copy, and the question of how much of *The Tempest*'s textual presentation can be attributed to Crane, to the compositors, and to Shakespeare's original can only be guessed at. The occasional confusion of verse and prose in the text is a more significant matter, not only in those speeches of Caliban's that are set as prose but have the rhythms of blank verse, but more puzzlingly when bits of Stefano's and Trinculo's dialogue appear as verse, or in the anarchic prose of Act I, Scene I where an expostulation of the Boatswain's is printed as verse, as is a passage described in the stage directions as '*a confused noise within*', but which is metrically perfectly regular. Some mislineation can be ascribed to the compositors.

Roberts adds that Crane 'often wrote prose in segments which did not fill out lines and therefore looked like verse', and extant Crane texts do not extend prose further to the right of the page than verse, as is customary in other theatrical manuscripts.

What all this means is that there are a number of variables between what Shakespeare wrote and the text that appears in the Folio.

There seems to me only one place in the play where a strong argument for revision can be made, at 1.2.301-4. The play has in this century been subjected to two theories of wholesale revision. Dover Wilson found the tightness of its construction and its observation of the unities suspect, and postulated an earlier version in which the action covered twelve years. This structure is clearly modelled on *The Winter's Tale*. Dover Wilson's thesis was rebutted in details by Chambers, and has never gained any serious support. There have also been a number of attempts to show that the masque is an interpolation, possibly non-Shakespearian, designed to make the play appropriate to the celebration of the wedding of James I's daughter Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine in February 1613: *The Tempest* was performed a second time at court, along with thirteen other plays, during the season preceding the marriage.

The Date.

The earliest reference to *The Tempest* is a record in the Revels Accounts of a performance at court on 1 November 1611. The play is almost certainly indebted to a letter of William Strachey describing the voyage of Sir William Somers to Virginia in the summer of 1609. Strachey's letter is dated from Virginia 15 July 1610. Two pamphlets published later in the same year dealt with the Virginia company and with Somers's expedition: *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colony in Virginia*, the Company's own report of the state of its affairs, and Sylvester Jourdan's *A Discovery of the Bermudas*. These accounts may also have been in Shakespeare's mind.

Discussion of the play's date has been complicated by the assumption persisting since the early nineteenth century that *The Tempest* was Shakespeare's last play. A corollary thesis has strongly conditioned critical attitudes to it. For the moment, we may deal simply with the facts: the first of these assumptions is demonstrably wrong. We know that *Henry VIII* was a new play when it was produced at the Globe in 1613. Shakespeare's two collaborations with Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and the lost *Cardenio*, were also written after *The Tempest*. Simon Forman recorded in his journal that he saw *The Winter's Tale* at the Globe on 15 May 1611, and the play seems to include an illusion to Ben Jonson's masque *Oberon*. Kermode tries to make something of the fact that Forman 'apparently did not see *The Tempest*' at the Globe in the spring season of 1611, when, in addition to *The Winter's Tale*, he saw *Cymbeline*, *Macbeth*, and non-Shakesperean *Richard II*.

The Play on the Stage.

We can say with reasonable confidence that before the closing of the theatres *The Tempest* was performed at the Blackfriars as well as at court. There is no evidence that it was performed at the Globe.

The play was first revived after the reopening of the theatres on 7 November 1667, in a version for the most part by Davenant, with some additions by Dryden. *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island* includes less than a third of Shakespeare's text. Prospero's role is radically reduced, and Miranda and Caliban are provided with sisters, Dorinda and Sycorax. Davenant also introduces a youth named Hippolito, who has never seen a woman. The comic scenes are greatly elaborated. A good deal of music and dance is added, though Prospero's masque is omitted. The production was very popular.

Devenant's *Tempest* has earned little but scorn from historians of the theatre and as a commentary on Shakespeare's play it is enlightening in many of the ways that a good parody can be. The insistent parallelisms and repetitions in Davenant's plot are an elaboration of elements that are implicit in the original, and Davenant's Hippolito represents a genuinely interesting idea about the play. His story acts out Prospero's most profound fear in Shakespeare's text.

Hippolito is the infant Duke of Mantua, bequeathed by his dying father to Prospero's care. The relationship between burgeoning sexuality and impending death is never explained further than this, and Davenant employs it, of course, as a comic device, not a potentially tragic one. The role in the first production was taken by a woman, initially merely for lack of a suitable young man.

For all its obvious burlesque qualities, Hippolito's sub-plot embodies an astute and accurate critical perception.

The Restoration *Tempest* had its greatest and most continuous success after 1674. Some of the vocal music was retained, new songs were set by Pietro Reggio and the gentleman amateur James Hart, new dances were composed by the Master of the Queen's Music, G.B. Draghi, and the instrumental music was by Matthew Locke. John Downes, recalled 'particularly one Scene Painted with *Myriads of Ariel Spirits*. *The Tempest* in this form became a staple of the theatrical repertory.

Between 1710 and 1732, Dogget and Barton Booth, the opera was revived in twenty of the twenty-three seasons.

It was not until 1746 that Drury Lane offered the play 'As written by Shakespeare, never acted thee before'. In 1756 Garrick presented a new opera based on *The Tempest*, composed by John Christopher Smith, a pupil of Handel's.

Sheridan the first of his reign at Drury Lane, retained Garrick's text but reintroduced both the masque of Neptune and Amphitrite and the 'Grand Dance of Fantastic Spirits' which inaugurated Shadwell's disappearing banquet scene. The production had new settings by de Loutherberg, and was

criticized in *The Westminster Magazine* for endeavouring 'to throw an enchantment suited to the childish taste of the present times' over Shakespeare, and for its emphasis on music and dancing - for looking too much like a Christmas pantomime. Machinery was still a crucial element in the play's popularity.

But the move back to Shakespeare's text was only temporary. In 1789 Drury Lane presented a new *Tempest* by John Philip Kemble, which restored Hippolito, Dorinda, and their Restoration colleagues, and much of the spectacle and music of Davenant, Dryden, and Shadwell.

Kemble moved to Covent Garden in 1803. In 1806 he produced another *Tempest*. The operatic elements were now drastically reduced, though the plot was still substantially Davenant's. This version of the play remained in repertory until 1817. Hazlitt was outraged by it. The performers he declared mediocre, and the text was 'travestie, caricature, any thing you please, but a representation'.

The stage history of *The Tempest* from the Restoration to the beginning of Victoria's reign exhibits a remarkable coherence. What is especially notable in this history is the separateness of the performing and the editorial traditions, which intersect only rarely and relatively briefly. The eighteenth century saw the most serious and continuous effort before the present to produce an accurate and authentic text of Shakespeare. No producer until Garrick ever thought of that authentic text as the one that should or could be *The Tempest* of the repertory. Even Garrick's text cut about 20 per cent out of the play, and two decades in which it could be seen in Drury Lane constitute only a brief moment in a very long history. Nevertheless Davenant's *Tempest* held the stage.

The play's divided textual history naturally had a profound effect on developing interpretative traditions in the theatre as one would expect. In the case of Ariel even Davenant and Dryden proved unsatisfactory guides to performance practice. Ariel had been a male role throughout the seventeenth century. Indeed, Davenant's Ariel is far more explicitly male than Shakespeare's and Dryden's Prologue goes to some pains to point out that in the new theatre, except in the unavoidable case of eighteenth century, however, Ariel, like Hippolito, had become exclusively a woman's role, usually taken by a singer who was also a dancer, and so it remained until the 1930s. In this form, Prospero's servant was the central figure in an increasingly elaborate series of operatic and balletic spectacles.

This account of Caliban is deaf to the poetry. Davenant's Caliban is far less malign, a bumptious clod, engagingly protective of his sister Sycorax, and even exhibiting an intermittently affectionate nature. On the stage, the role in the eighteenth century tended to stress the comic and burlesque, rather than the malevolent and threatening, and served as a foil for the more standard professional comedy of Trinculo and Stephano.

Davenant and Shadwell simply as 'fantastic'. By the mid-eighteenth century they have become explicitly diabolical, and Prospero has developed Faustian overtones.

As the criticism suggests, the return to Shakespeare's text was accompanied by no diminution of spectacular effects. Such productions prompted theatrical as well as critical reactions. Samuel Phelp's Sadler's Wells production of 1847, had been especially praised for its emphasis on the text.

The most interesting interpretative developments in Victorian productions increasingly focused on the figure of Caliban.

Dramatic production today are rarely conceived in so direct a way as re-creations of the past, and the pressure towards consistency of all kinds has significantly diminished. Nevertheless, the alliance between theatre and history remains in its way a strong one: modern Shakespeare productions often take possession of the Renaissance and in doing so find the meaning of the play in the version the past can be made to provide of our own history.

Midsummer Night's Dream

Introduction

A *Midsummer Night's Dream* is probably the most performed of all Shakespeare's plays. It has always seemed a play peculiarly perfect, ideally compact and coherent in its form. Like the work of Freudian analysis of genuine dreams, critics considering a *Midsummer Night's Dream* find that the play has a 'manifest' level behind which lurks their own version of the 'latent dream'. For Freudians, dreamers change their dreams as they remember them, this 'dream-work' transforming the latent dream through a process of distortion involving four techniques, identified as condensation, displacement, representation and symbolisation. The task of the critic should then be to uncover the dream-work that has made the 'real' subject of the play. The childlike world of the play is then, part of its attempt to avoid the repressed conflict or to resolve it through the fantasy of fictitious solutions 'that are marked by infantile characteristics and are often contradictory among themselves.

For Jungians, this approach to decoding the secrets of a dream is mistaken. But modern scientific analysis of dream has moved from the psychoanalytic to the psycho-physiological, finding the source of dreams in neural activity.

Dreams

Dreams and dreaming.

Wittgenstein tried comparing his own dreams. There is no evidence to indicate whether Wittgenstein knew *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and yet this passage could in so many ways be an anxious paraphrase of the exchange between Theseus and Hippolyta at the opening to Act 5. Wittgenstein's description of a dream as 'all wrong, absurd' belongs firmly within the rationalist framework of Theseus's 'More strange than true'. Theseus wants it to 'be possible to say of the events of the night in the wood that 'things aren't like that' but the night-world has, as the audience by this stage is well aware, laws of its own that he does not understand. Indeed, like a dream, an awareness of reality that communicates itself to the dreamer, or that the dreamer creates in creating the dream, the play as a whole is both 'completely unrealistic' and yet 'at the same time ... quite right'.

The experiences have been turned into dream, but they were not. Titania, tells Oberon 'what visions have I seen' but her 'love'. The lovers returns 'back to Athens' assuming that 'all this derision' that they experienced in the wood is

perhaps, as Oberon promises, nothing more than 'a dream and fruitless vision', though they worry about whether it is indeed fruitless. Bottom wakes having had what he without hesitation describes as 'a dream past the wit of a man to say what dream it was'. Robin even gives the whole audience the option of considering the entire play as a dream in his epilogue.

Oberon and Robin make it possible for the other characters to see the play as a dream, not, that is, *like* a dream but as a dream itself, a true dream experience not a similitude.

Oneiro-criticism was a standard and important part of classical divination. Only one major account of early Graeco-Roman interpretation has survived: the *Oneirocritica* by Artemidorus of Daldis, written in the second century AD. Artemidorus emphasizes throughout that dream-analysis must not only take into account what happens in the dream but also the name of the dreamer, his or her occupation, habits and attitudes.

Artemidorus is, concerned to classify dreams, providing a system of significance within which all dreams may be easily placed. The process of classifying a dream-experience, pigeon-holing it conveniently or troublingly, is central to the way that characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* relate to their forms of dream and Artemidorus' system is fundamental to Western thinking about dreams until well after the date of Shakespeare's play. His basic distinction is between a predictive dream, which he terms *oneiros*, and a non-predictive one, termed *enhypnion*. The latter are simply 'anxiety-dreams' and petitionary dreams'. There is for him nothing at all interesting in the fact that a lover may dream of the beloved, hungry people dream of food and thirsty people dream of drink. These dreams lie outside his professional concerns. Dreams of the past and present are necessarily less interesting to his clients; they will also lie outside the concerns of most subsequent dream-analysis.

But if *enhypnion* dreams can be disregarded as insignificant or irrational fantasies, *Oneiroi* matter enormously. These dreams or visions, are the stuff of his analysis. Such proper dreams can be further subdivided into two groups: direct or theorematic and indirect or allegorical. Direct dreams show without metaphor what will occur: a dream of a shipwreck may indeed mean that the next day the dreamer will be shipwrecked. Allegorical dreams signify by replacement. A dream is a claim by the mind.

His attempts to categorize dreams are full and inventive. Some features of a dream are treated as tightly defined within their range of meanings. A serpent such as appeared to Hermia could signify a king, because of its strength, or time, because of its length and skin-changing, or wealth, because it often guards treasure, or any of the gods who use it as a symbol of their sacredness. A serpent is not the same as a snake: snake signify sickness or an enemy. At the same time he is concerned to emphasize the same dream may have different meanings according to circumstances of the dreamer. He gives examples of seven women who had the same dream, during pregnancy, of

giving birth to a serpent. In each case the relationship between the serpent of the dream and the son varied. One child became famous public speaker, because speakers share with serpents advantages of forked tongues. One son became a priest because the serpent is a sacred animal and the dreamer was a priest's wife. A bad woman's son was a thief and beheaded because serpents are beheaded when caught.

There were sixteenth-century translations of Artemidorus into Latin, Italian, French and German. A fairly full English translation by Robin Wood was first published in 1606 as *The Judgement or Exposition of Dreams* and had reached its twenty-fourth edition by 1740.

The major late-classical statement on dreams is by Macrobius. The popularity of Macrobius ensured that his dream-classifications became the basis of much early medieval dream-theory. Macrobius plainly derives his ideas from Artemidorus and translates his divisions and classifications into Latin. *Oneiros* dreams are broken down into three types: *somnium*, *visio* and *oraculum*. There are for Macrobius the only significant kinds of dream. *Enhypnion* dreams are divided into *insomnium* and *visum*; neither is prophetic.

But medieval writers were less concerned with a classificatory system for a Macrobian typology of dreams than with the means to decode those dreams that could be seen as visionary. There were four types of medieval dreambooks: chancebooks often used with psalters, physiological dreambooks defining dreams as indications of physiological ailments, dream-lunars which interpreted dreams differently according to the day of the lunar month and hence the phase of the moon, and alphabetical dreambooks.

It is the last category that were most common. Known in hundreds of different manuscripts from the ninth century to the fifteenth, the *Somnia Danielis* is 'a library of ancient dream topoi'. In different versions of the *Somnia*, Hermia's serpent most often indicated enemies, conquered or victorious according to what happened to dream-serpent.

What the long tradition of dream-theory suggests above all is that the indecipherability of dreams, the ambiguity of their sources, underlines the danger for the dreamer. But the tradition also emphasized the extent to which dreams underline the humanity of the dreamer.

Renaissance Dreams.

English Renaissance texts on dreams. They derive their classificatory systems and their analysis of causality from the kind of works. The conventionality of Renaissance thinking on the subject provides the framework within which the experiences within *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and that of the whole play by the audience would have been understood. How the lovers understand their dream or the audience the play depend on reconciling the experience with the forms of dream with which Oberon or Robin align the action.

Thomas Hill made perhaps the most coherent attempt in the period to provide an orthodox presentation of dream-science in English. For Hill, true dreams 'only happen to such, whose spirits are occupied with no irrational imaginations, nor overcharged with the burthen of meat or drinks, or superfluous humours, nor given to any other bodily pleasures'. Any other are, 'vain dreams'. Hill provides four categories according to whether the causes are bodily or not and new or not; causes can be categorized as food, humours, anxieties and those 'which frame the superior cause come unto the soul' or are divinely caused, are generated by the soul; as Wood's Artemidorus states, 'a dream therefore is a motion or fiction of the soul in a diverse form'. The memory provides images derived from the events that immediately preceded falling asleep; the vegetative soul provides images from the state of the body during sleep.

Such dreams are unlikely to be true 'there is no certainty in dreams', since the soul is working without the active support of the external senses. Wood's Artemidorus and Hill's accumulation of fragments of Renaissance theory are full of curiosities, such as the belief that dreams dreamed 'in the hour of the full moon or change'. But it seems less significant than the confident assertion of that sense of true understanding that comes through the dream. As Hill puts it, 'And a man also doth more comprehended in his dream than waking in the day-time, because in a dream is more resolved than that in the day which is troubled through the doings of the outwards sense'. Or, as Timothy Broght will later phrase it, 'in sleep our fantasy can perceive those truths which are denied to it when we are awake'. All one then has to do is to recall the dream: Wood recognises that 'before the attempting to interpret he willeth that one should have perfect remembrance of the beginning, the middle, the end, and all the cirucmstances of his dream'. As Demetrius will say in Act 4 of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Nashe's venom for dream-interpreters matters less than his sense of dreams as part of the curative function of sleep. But even Nashe carefully preserves the distinction between the impenetrability and untrustworthiness of dream.

His reminder is Apollo, for, 'dreams and their interpretations seem particularly to agree and belong to poets, because that to their Apollo is attributed and dedicated, not only the art of Poetry, but also the knowledge and interpretation of dreams', a more sympathetic insight into the poet's imagination than that offered by Theseus.

Not all dreams have such divine sources. Hermia's dream appears to have a straightforward and direct cause. When Hermia and Lysander prepare themselves for sleep, Lysander is determined to be as close to Hermia as possible, while she, distrusts his intentions and wants to be sure he keeps his distance. Tired and lost though he may be, Lysander see the opportunity of being alone with Hermia in the wood as too good to pass up. For all the elegant virtuosity of hid reasoning it is clear he has sex in fresco in mind and Hermia has to be fairly insistent in giving him the verbal equivalent of a goodnight peck on the check.

Eighteenth-century productions had difficulty with this part of the scene. Francis Gentleman, in 1774, marked the lines for omission they may raise warm ideas. The Morality of the moment was troubling: how could Lysander, be seen to be suggesting pre-marital sex and how could Hermia, a virtuous maid, understand what he had in mind? In the version David Garrick prepared with George Colman the Elder in 1763, the passage is substantially rewritten.

Garrick's Robin has to produce some fairy music to 'throw this youth into a trance', a 'sweet enchanting harmony' that Lysander cannot resist. Lysander has presented Hermia with the problem of his sexual desire, and her dream enacts her anxiety about it. At the same time the dream represents Hermia's careful disjunction of Lysander as phallic serpent from Lysander himself, who sits smiling and separate from the actions of his penis, thereby ensuring that the phallic threat from Lysander is dissociated from the 'person' Lysander to some extent. A Freudian reading of the dream would find in the object of the phallic attack, Hermia's breast and heart, a displacement from her vagina. Lysander, is both passive and complicit, accepting, in effect, the sexual desire that Hermia has for him but that she has refused to acknowledge. But Hermia offers her own explanation of the dream when she wakes. Accusing Demetrius of having murdered Lysander she turns him into a serpent. Demetrius has eaten Hermia's heart out by killing her love Lysander. In her comparison with the adder and its double tongue, Demetrius' protestations of innocence intensify his status as serpent. The dream is now somehow Demetrius' fault.

This is grotesquely and comically unfair to Demetrius for, if Hermia's dream has obvious cause in the events preceding sleeping, it is also oneiric in its warning of an event taking place as Hermia dreams: for Lysander, has transferred his affections from Hermia to Helena and is therefore the classic betrayer, smiling on another. Lysander is a passive actor in this change and his passivity in Hermia's dream seems to mimic this. The dream is then also an inner experience for Hermia reflecting the action that takes place during her sleep.

But this does not quite explain why Hermia should dream of a serpent. Where in effect does the dream come from? There seems to be something about the place where Hermia dreams that makes a dream about a serpent both likely and richly resonant. Oberon had already defined it as a place where 'the snake throws her enamelled skin', defining this beneficial snake that is a source of fairy clothes as female.

Demetrius is accused by Hermia of having a 'doubler' tongue than an adder; he has also been accused by Lysander of being 'spotted and inconstant' for changing from Helena to Hermia. The line links 'spotted' with inconstancy; the lullaby links 'spotted' with snakes. Hermia dream turns Lysander into a serpent at the very moment that he is being 'spotted and inconstant'.

The richness of this suggestiveness even allows the dream to transfer from one person to another. When Hermia does find Lysander again, now changed and spotted, she hangs on to him as he tries to shake her off. He has now

turned her into a serpent entwined around him. Hermia has not had a chance to tell Lysander her dream. Oberon's spell on Titania conjures up her possible objects of desire.

Dramatic dreams.

Hermia's dream may be a rich *oneiros* such as Artemidorus would have been proud to interpret, a dense enigma to be read across the whole play. But the whole play, of course, calls itself a dream. The fascination with the dream as an overarching device, an embedding form for poetry is an immense powerful tradition in English medieval poetry.

The most intriguing version of a dream play is the ending of *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), the play that is somehow connected with Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Shakespeare's Induction has Sly who has fallen drunkenly asleep found by a Lord who, for fun, has Sly carried off, transformed into a gentleman and made to sit and watch a play. At a point equivalent to Shakespeare's 5.1.102 *A Shrew's* Sly falls asleep again.

As in the experience of the mortals who enter the wood in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the play's events can be taken to be nothing more than a dream. Unlike Bottom, Sly is only too keenly aware of the person he was (is) outside this 'dream'-experience: 'What would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly. Sly, of course, much prefers this new reality and 'would loath to fall into my dreams again'.

The Lord had assumed that the experience will be for reawakened Sly nothing more than 'a flatt'ring dream or worthless fancy'. Sly's assumption that he can put the dream-play into effect against the unseen stereotype of the wife waiting for the drunken husband with the Elizabethan equivalent of the rolling-pin may be comic bravado. But in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* there is the whole of Act 5 to come.

In *Rome and Juliet*, written, most probably, immediately before *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare makes the matter of dreams Mercurio's and places it in the world of Queen Mab.

Dream may be mocked and belittled - throughout *A Midsummer Night's Dream* it often is - but it strikes back at those who mock it. Lysander defines true love as 'short as any dream' (1.1.144) but the play will make the true love of Lysander and Hermia endure much longer than a night of adventures in the wood. Hippolyta reassures Theseus that 'Four nights will quickly dream away the time' (1.1.8) before their wedding but the time will be dream in senses other and far richer than her lines suggest. Oberon may say of the lovers, exactly the same contrast between the supposed empty brevity of the nothing of the dream and the enduring consequences that hover over Lysander's 'short as any dream'.

Oberon's line has combined dream and vision. This dream is an attempt to resolve the great puzzle of dream-theory, the source of dreams, for this dream

is not the product of the dreamer's imagination or the reformulation of the experiences of the day but a phenomenon generated by extra-human forces. Such dreams matter greatly.

Fairies.

For adults in the audience it is a moment of nostalgia and embarrassed sadness. For them the mechanics of theatre, inhibit belief. Fairies are for children and the history of productions and illustrations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been bedevilled by the assumption that a fairy-play was essentially a childish piece of magic gossamer.

Popular belief in fairies is notoriously difficult to document, but it seem reasonable to sum up what can be taken as normal rural Elizabethan assumptions about fairies as a widespread acceptance of a body of traditional belief that fairies existed. In particular there was the group of fairies dubbed 'trooping fairies' who shared with their Celtic ancestors certain characteristics: an interest in riding, hunting, dancing and feasting; abilities to shift size and shape, fly and become invisible generosity with presents to mortals and equal generosity with punishments, particularly pinching and the removing of human children as changelings.

Shakespeare's fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and elsewhere belong firmly and comfortably within the tradition. His fairies' size seems to shift unpredictable and fluidly. They are small enough to wear snake-skins (2.1.255-6), creep into acorn cups (2.1.31) and risk being covered with one bee's honeybag. Their names suggest their small size: Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mote, Mustard-seed. Oberon is usually argued to have been played by an adult male actor but it is often thought that Titania's fairies were played by boys.

Presenting the fairies is perhaps the most acute problem for any modern director of the play. The history of the play in performance can be defined in terms of the treatment of the fairies on-stage. At the Royal National Theatre in 1992, the fairies were adults, half-naked, dressed in black and prone to slither through the muddy pond that dominated the set. That style of performance has an extremely long history: Frank Benson's production at the Globe Theatre in 1889 included for Act 2 24 dancing girls and 12 dancing boys arranged two by two and later supplemented by 16 ladies in green; Charles Kean's production in 1858 at the Princess's Theatre included 54 fairies to sing a chorus to the sleeping lovers at the end of 3.2 and, in Act 5 when the mortals left the stage, Snout's earlier attempt to metamorphose into a wall paled beside the spectacle of the whose back wall of the set sinking to 'discover Oberon, Titania and Fairies grouped all over the stage' with nearly 90 fairies going up and down the staircases. George Devine's 1954 production at Stratford resisted Lilian Baylis's dictum, 'I like my fairies gauzy', and searched for a different model from 'the dainty midget, the tutu fairy, the decorative butterfly of recent tradition'; his fairies were 'beaked and feathered, Titania with white eye-streaks from crown to bill that gave her the air, light, bright and ferocious, of a falcon'.

What the theatre history suggests is a reflection of a problem present at the moment of writing the play: the changing pattern of belief over fairies. Seen as harmless or at least less threatening, fairies no longer deserved believing. Ben Jonson brings the fairy queen to London in *The Alchemist* but plays that use fairies, as much as folk-tales and other accounts, restrict their appearances to the world beyond the city, a world 'out there' where such creatures may exist but which can also be, with anxious patronizing assurance, dismissed. Robert Weimann suggests that 'the fact that the seriousness of the belief in such airy creatures was more and more widely undermined made their playfully imaginative treatment in the public theatre possible' but the evidence clearly shows that it was not in the public theatres that fairies were seen.

The entertainments offered to Elizabeth at Woodstock in 1575 included a moment when 'Her Majesty thus in the middest of this mirth might espy the Queen of the Fairy drawn with six children in a waggon of state'. The Fairy Queen approached verses and nosegays. The Queen of Fairies drew attention to their unusual appearance in public. On the fourth day of the Elvetham entertainments of 1591 the Fairy Queen appeared yet again, dancing with her maids, presented Elizabeth with a garland of flowers and sang and danced so successfully that Elizabeth 'desired to see ad hear it twice over'.

Apart from these events, all significantly including the fairy queen, fairies also made a very brief and silent entrance in Lyly's *Gallathea* (1592), 'dancing and playing and so, Exeunt'. Fairies offered a convenient excuse for songs and dances and Shakespeare responded fully to the opportunities they provided. But the fairy queen of these entertainments offered the other much more resonant symbolic import. As Dr Johnson sums it up, in his observation on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in his edition of 1765, 'Fairies in his time were much in fashion; common tradition had made them familiar, and Spenser's poem had made them great'. In effect, Shakespeare is combining two markedly separate traditions, one in which the fairy kingdom is ruled by a fairy queen alone and another in which there is a joint and equal power-sharing monarchy king and queen. While the fairy queen is usually nameless, the fairy king is more usually named Oberon. Though briefly mentioned in Spenser's poem and at Elvetham, Oberon is a much less potent figure than the fairy queen. For the fairy queen to be connected with court entertainments was inevitable but Shakespeare appears to have taken some notice of the appearance of the fairy king in Greene's some notice of the appearance of the fairy king in Greene's *James IV*. His Oberon is an observer of the action who agrees to help Slipper when needed, as Oberon had helped Huon in the later parts of the romance. Like Titania's fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, these fairies sing a lullaby.

Shakespeare's Oberon is making an extremely unusual and powerful claim for the extent of his power and influence by calming Robin's fears at the imminence of the dawn: 'But we are spirits of another sort' (3.2.388).

It is though, in naming his fairy queen Titania that Shakespeare is most disruptive of the isolable native fairy tradition. Shakespeare derives his choice of name Titania, directly from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where it appears five times, including once for Diana in the narrative of Actaeon. Golding's translation is accurate. Shakespeare's use of an Ovidian name is a mirroring of Golding's incorporation of English fairies in his translation of Ovid. Ovid's classical nymphs become fairies with remarkable frequency: an oared become 'the fayrie of the hill'; naiads and dryads become 'the Fairies which| Reported are the pleasant woods and water springs to haunt'; where nymphs dwelt is now 'the fayres bowre'. But it also allows him to invoke and use extensively the complex associations of Diana and Titania.

Shakespeare's view of fairies in the rest of his work is both uniform and unlike the fairies of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the *Comedy of Errors*, when Antipholus of Syracuse and his Dromio find themselves invited to dinner with Adriana, Dromo turns to popular folk-lore. Dromio's expectation of being pinched seems perfectly reasonable: that is what fairies do. But the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are not tormenting, pinching, punishing elves at all. Robin apart, the fairies seem remarkably, conspicuously and consistently benevolent towards mortals. Oberon's one concern is to put things right. This emphasis on fairy benevolence seems to have been Shakespeare's invention. Their dissociation from the ghosts and damned spirits is reassuring in its metamorphosis of the tradition. Even the changeling, one of the darkest and most disturbing features of fairy-lore, the notion of the healthy child removed and replaced by a weak fairy child, is here changed into an expression of friendship and delight, a cherished reminder of Titania's dead friend, a mortal who shared jokes with Titania as Bottom will; the changeling is brought up 'for her sake'.

Shakespeare's fairy world is more than an adjunct and parallel reality with its own rules and activities. It is also a source of our actions. The blessings of Oberon and Titania are more than the well-wishes of some fascinating Eastern princelings; they are a genuine benediction from a source of power and influence.

Robin.

For Reginald Scot, Robin Goodfellow belonged to a previous time when he 'kept to such a coil in the country' but he 'ceaseth now to be much feared, and popery is sufficiently discovered'. Robin Goodfellow, hobgoblins and pucks all belonged to the same group of fairies, a class of rough, hairy domestic spirits characterized by their mischievousness. Nashe describes the 'Robin Goodfellows, Elves, Fairies, Hobgoblins of our latter age, which idolatrous former days and the fantastical world of Greece ycleped *fawns, Satyrs, Dryads, and Hamadryads*', who 'did most of their merry pranks in the night. Shakespeare alone combines the three into a single spirits, Robin Goodfellow the puck, also known as 'hobgoblin'.

But in any case, Robin as 'the best-known and most often referred to of all the Hobgoblins of England in the 16th and 17th centuries...seemed to swallow all others and their names were nicknames of his'. If hobglobins 'and pucks were fairly universally feared, the attitude to Robin was more ambivalent. If he could be summed up as occupying 'the unique position of the national practical joker', his victims may not have been so amused. The 1628 pamphlet's narrative of his pranks and tricks is prefaced by the language of fairy-tale, balancing his pranks and his blessings. The pamphlet belongs to the sudden efflorescence of interest in Robin in the 1630s but earlier commentators narrated similar tricks. Robin was a country spirit, operating indoors and out in rural communities. His principal area of work was in the house, working to help tidy and hardworking maids with housework, 'sweeping the house at midnight' and grinding 'malt or mustard', and working equally hard to create more chaos for those who did not leave him out his reward of a bowl of milk and while bread.

The use of Robin in pamphlets reappears in *Tell-Truth's New-year's Gift* where he brings 'news out of those countries, where inhabits neither charity nor honesty'. This Robin is concerned to help young women to marry as they wish, against the wishes of authoritarian parents who 'do not match them with the mates their children's eyes have chosen, but with the men their own greedy desire have found out'. The pamphlet makes Robin a helper against an army of Egeuses.

Robin belongs firmly and almost exclusively to a popular and folk-lore tradition; only at one point does he appear to have made contact with the court. Shakespeare may have found a partial dramatic source for the energetic elf in the character of Shrimp in Anthony Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. The problem here is that the date of Munday's play is unclear and the manuscript ends with a note in Munday's hand that might refer to 1590 or to 1596. Munday's play certainly does not appear to have learnt anything from the structural brilliance of Shakespeare's play. Shrimp shares four significant characteristics with Shakespeare's Robin: he is always rushing off the stage at high speed; he crows at his success; he is most often invisible to the other characters on-stage as he leads them up and down false trails; he frequently comments in asides about what he intends to do.

While Shrimp may be a dramatic source, Shakespeare also used a massive iconic source, for Robin is in many respects the play's Cupid. Oberon's description of 'Cupid's all armed' in flight makes it clear that Robin cannot in any way be wholly identified with Cupid. His own relish of Cupid's activities may be nothing more than the approval of a professional rival. But his dramatic function aligns him closely with Cupid in the play's mythological schema, the spirit responsible for creating irrational affection and the one responsible for transforming it into a harmonious and socially acceptable desire.

If Robin is indeed a form of dramatic Cupid then one would expect the role to have been played by a boy. Certainly Shrimp was a boy in Munday's play but there is no suggestion that the Robin Goodfellow of folk-lore was anything other than adult, even if such matters size is rarely a guide.

When Robin appears Titania's fairy is not entirely sure who he is and has certainly only heard of him: the fairy's lines suggest that Robin looks distinctly different from the other fairies, even the ones in Oberon's train. For most of the play's history the dominant images of Robin have been derived from illustrations to the play rather than performances. Robin is not specifically identifiable in the two-illustrations to Rowe's editions of 1709 and 1714 but in Francois Gravelot's engraving for Theobald's 1740 edition, 'a very English and Elizabethan' Robin appears squeezing the juice into Lysander's eyes, dressed in a broad-collared Elizabethan shirt and wearing a jester's cap, plainly suggesting his position with Oberon, 'I jest to Oberon, and make his smile'.

In the theatre Robin was entangled in the stage machinery, complete with flying, dummies, and even flying dummies. In the structure of separate worlds that Shakespeare formed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Robin's position is more oddly isolated than anyone else. It is a technique that fascinated Shakespeare and he returned to it in, for example, *Othello*, where Roderigo is almost completely restricted to dialogue with Iago, and, with distinctly comparable effect, in *The Tempest*, where Ariel, clearly a metamorphosis of Robin, talks directly in his own voice only to Prospero while all his speeches to other characters are either a virtuosic extension of Robin's ventriloquism in 3.2 or a form of role-playing, as, for example, a harpy.

For large sections of the play the action is watched by Robin, an observer and commentator, a participant through his invisibility, a doubly disturbing presence in that he both disturbs the action and disturbs our reactions to it. What Robin has above all is the ability to be the agent of metamorphosis, transform himself and others. He 'exemplifies the spirit of metamorphosis for its own sake'. Even his name unfixed: he is 'Robin Goodfellow...hobgoblin...Sweet puck'. He can change himself into a 'filly foal', 'a roasted crab', a 'three-foot stool', 'a horse...a hound'.

Theseus and Hippolyta.

In Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale' in *The Canterbury Tales*, Shakespeare found a number of details he used in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Chaucer alone gave Theseus the title of Duke and identifies as the initiating moment for his narrative his return to Athens with his new bride, Hippolyta. Though other details of Theseus' life were taken from North's translation of Plutarch's 'Life of Theseus', paired with Romulus, in *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (1579), North was unsure whether the Amazon Theseus married was named Hippolyta or, Antiopa. Shakespeare makes Antiopa one of the long list of women Theseus seduced and abandoned.

Neither Chaucer nor North has much to say about Amazons. Amazons appeared throughout the range of Elizabethan writing, embodying a range of characteristics threatening men: female sexual desire, self-mutilation, the rejection and subjugation of men, disobedience to male dominance through their effective self-governance, uncontrolled female will, female strength and success in the male skills of war. Their traditional dress, armed with axes and shields, wearing buskins and with one breast exposed or amputated, specified their intrusiveness from a distant land into accepted conventions of male control. The Amazonian inversion of gender hierarchy has been resolved before *A Midsummer Night's Dream* begins and the blessing on future children at the end of the play does not in the slightest suggest that their mother is an infanticidal threat. Hippolyta has been conquered, defeated into marriage. Theseus is well aware that this courtship has been entirely military but his language leaves unclear whether she has simply agreed through defeat or whether she is now in love with him. Chaucer's Ypolita is silent; Shakespeare's Hippolyta allowed one speech in the scene, a speech ambiguously of reassurance to Theseus at the rapid passage of time or reluctant recognition that the time of her independence has nearly ended. In either case Hippolyta as an image of female monarch defeated and subject to a man is unlikely to have appealed to Elizabeth.

Theseus' second expression of male power over female marriage is explicitly made through recognition of the established legal rights of the father control the daughter. Though he offers some form of apology for the necessity of his own obedience to the law, he fully adumbrates and accepts the notion of paternal power that the law frames in its punitive form. Theseus' antagonism towards virginity is expressed in the implications that keep bursting through his attempts to praise, with appropriate religious respect, the lot of the nun, a life of barrenness and withering, 'Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon'. Hippolyta constitutes in Act I an unrealized or at least unsuccessful opposition to the principles of male power that Theseus so completely embodies. There is only the implicit antagonism to male power that the audience's conventional approval of Hermia allows it to extend towards Hippolyta, denying, however implicitly, the complex of pejorative associations that cluster around the image of the Amazon. North, however, in the comparison between Theseus and Romulus heavily emphasizes the problem of Theseus' relationships with women.

Theseus' successive abandonment of women he had raped and/or married is, for North, an example of his bad government, belonging with his gradual degeneration into 'a very tyrant'. For all the virtue of his exploits as a young man, the older Theseus represents a figure to be rejected, not approved. Certainly Theseus' character was widely documented and denounced for his 'dissolute and vicious living' in medial and Elizabethan literature.

The Lovers.

Shakespeare had numerous resources to call on for the lovers. The complex interlocking of two pairs of lovers in a pattern of chaos and confusion is a staple of romance. He would have come across it in the tangle achieved by Philoclea, Zelmane, Basilius and Gynecia in Sidney's *Arcadia*. Cinthio's treatment of his lovers is certainly close to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* than any of the other suggestions: in Cinthio, love is an involuntary attraction among indistinguishable lovers who are trying to evade parental authority and whose escape is disrupted by a certain amount of supernatural intervention. More problematic is Shakespeare's possible use of Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (1559) and Gil Polo's continuation and re-examination of the romance in *Diana Enamorada* (1564). A number of features of the two romances seem to be echoed by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: the dominance of the goddess Diana who 'is seen as devoted noy primarily to chastity, but to finding a happy solution to lovers' problems', the use of a love-juice to restore the lovers to their rightful pairs, the recurrent tension between reason and love and the lovers' sense of their experiences after they wake up.

The initiative with establishing a couple, the definition of a relationship leading towards marriage, lay with young people in all but the very highest reaches of early modern English society. With marriages usually taking place when individuals were well into their twenties, the move to defining a couple is a move from two forms of behaviours. First came the homosocial work of peer-group friendship. Rather than referring back to a childhood friendship, their relationship had begun early and would normally have continued until the development of particular heterosexual relationships disrupted it, as, from the beginning of the play, Hermia's friendship with Lysander takes her away from Helena. The second was the remarkably innocent forms of heterosexual contact. It is striking how much this sort of game is associated with festivals like St Valentine's Day or Maying, both of which are central to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Lysander met both Hermia and Helena to 'do observance to a morn of May'; it is not a private activity for a couple but a social celebration for a group, a time for friendship without too much intimacy, for in practice such events were remarkably chaste, whatever reformers may have argued. The courtship rituals of the play, the dance of the couples as they try to form themselves into fixed, unalterable pairs, were remarkably unremarkable. By the end of the play they have made the final move: 'courtship created a personal relationship; wedding made a public institution'. The events of the wood finalize that transition, the distinctions between the men and women that the lovers must sort out for themselves.

Bottom.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s transmutation of the residue of materials into its dream-world, no part of the plot has caused the adrenalin to pump through source-hunters' veins with the same thrill as Bottom's transformation at the hands of Robin. Shakespeare, as usual, transmutes a variety of 'sources', turning materials into contexts, develop and differ from, in its own particular pursuit of the meaning of Bottom's translation.

The most obvious source is probably Lucius Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* in William Adlington's translation of 1566. Lucius' transformation from man to ass is the consequence of his sexual desire as well as his curiosity. Adlington is concerned to moralize Lucius' change and associate it firmly with the massive tradition of moralized commentaries on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. But Adlington's moralizing tendencies and his occasional tendency to bowdlerize Apuleius' text cannot disguise the novel's gentle and genial fascination with the pleasures Lucius finds when transformed. His encounters with women have a tenderness and affection that is remarkably similar to Titania's word to Bottom in 4.1.

There are other significant links between Adlington's Apuleius and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, particularly the resonances between the myth of Cupid and Psyche and the events of the fairies and the wood. But Lucius' ordeal ends with his finally eating the roses that will transform him back again to a man after the intervention of the goddess Isis, who appears to him in a dream. In this final transformation the ass connects powerfully with the long tradition of the Feast of the Ass, a recurrent and significant form of serious mockery of the mass, found throughout the whole gamut of European medieval church ceremonies.

There are two major problems with treating Apuleius as a complete and sufficient source: Lucius is completely transformed whereas Bottom only wears an ass's head and Lucius is all too painfully aware of his transformation whereas Bottom is not. Both features are common in productions of the play. There are though, many candidates as source for partial transformations. Reginald Scot narrates a number of different transformations into asses in *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), a work with a number of references to Robin Godfellow.

This concern about the human faculty of reason and its irrelevance to an ass connects not only to Bottom's sage comments on reason and love while he is at least part-ass but is also central to the whole tradition of asses and folly. The most brilliant exploration of this notion of the ass and folly is in Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, the pinnacle of the *economium moriae* tradition. Erasmus is recurrently concerned with the ass-ness of men; one segment of society after another is described as 'ass-like'. He is also concerned with plays; Erasmus' *publicos ludos* become a 'a midsummer watch, or a stage play'. Erasmus' intellectual pyrotechnics convince the reader of the folly of wisdom and the wisdom of folly.

Along one track Bottom's transformation into a half-man, half-animal figure is reminiscent of a character never referred to directly in the play but closely tied to the play's mythological context, the Minotaur. Shakespeare never offers a direct link to Theseus' killing of the monster at the heart of the Cretan labyrinth. The play talks directly of 'mazes' (2.1.99) but they are turf mazes, not the one Deadalus constructed. The myth of Minotaur can then only function as a structure of analogy and difference. Seeing the wood as

labyrinthine does not mean therefore than the monster at its centre must be murdered. Invoking the Minotaur is to see the myth itself paradoxically and perhaps mockingly transformed. The terror and destructiveness that surrounds the image of the Minotaur is only too glaringly irrelevant to the benign and gentle harmlessness of Bottom. The marginalization of the Minotaur could define how our attention is really to be directed.

There is further resource on which Shakespeare calls, the theatre itself. Wearing animal masks has a long folk-tradition behind it. Animal masks were common in other forms of European medieval theatre, in entertainments by mummers and, in parades. These masks were either whole-head masks or, more often, masks that allowed part or all of the face to be seen, often through the gaping mouth. In performance the ass-headed is carefully placed as one of three masks which are used by the workers: Flute is reassured by Quince that he can play Thisbe in a mask ecc. Bottom's is a theatrical mask which becomes the actor's head, a role that cannot be put off at will.

Pyramus and Thisbe'.

Whatever else Shakespeare may or may not have been reading while he was writing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he was certainly reading Golding and Chaucer and in both he found ample narrative material for the plot of 'Pyramus and Thisbe'. It may be that the French tradition of Pyramus and Thisbe stories places greater emphasis on the role of the lovers' parents but there is no indication why Shakespeare should have gone such obscure sources when his own work on *Romeo and Juliet* had made him only too aware of the relationship between parents and tragic young lovers. Would a popular dramatist incorporate in a play a burlesque of a poem which he and a few others knew in manuscript? The answer is that he would not have done if the comedy depended on the audience's recognition of the source parodied, if, the parody itself was the object. But he might well have done so simply because the resultant parodic form was itself funny. Few critics seem to remember or care that modern audiences laugh almost unfailingly at 'Pyramus and Thisbe' without having read either Golding or Chaucer, in addition, audience appear to have less difficulty than scholars in recognizing that 'Pyramus and Thisbe' has a complex and powerful meaning within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, far more important than any local parodic effect.

George Sandy's emphasis, in later translations of *Metamorphoses* (1621) but one whose notes are densely responsive to the corpus of Ovidian commentary: the lovers' 'whose wretched ends upbraid those parents, who measure their children's by their own out-worn and deaded affections; in forcing them to serve their avarice or ambition in their fatal marriages... more cruel therein to their own, than either the malice of foes or fortune. Along such a line 'Pyramus and Thisbe' would have warned what might have happened had Egeus not been overruled. But Shakespeare's concern is with the actions of the lovers, not their parents.

Shakespeare certainly made use of at least one more version of the Pyramus and Thisbe story, finding hint in I. Thomson's 'A New Sonnet of Pyramus and Thisbe' and possibly in 'The History of Pyramus and Thisbe truly translated'. Ironically the most certain source of mockery is Shakespeare himself. Bottom's endlessly repeated cries of 'O' may owe something to Gascoigne's version of Euripides' *Jocasta* (1566) but they owe at least as much to the Nurse's lament over the 'dead' body of Juliet, an event which suggests some similarities with other events in 'Pyramus and Thisbe' as a comic character mistakes living for dead.

There were certainly plenty of plays from the 1580s and earlier with paradoxical titles like the one Quince announces for 'Pyramus and Thisbe'. Indeed *Romeo and Juliet* would be published as 'The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy' in 1599. Theseus' exclamations at 5.1.58 can be rewritten for plenty of better plays: 'excellent' and 'lamentable' for *Romeo*, 'tragedy' and 'comedy' for Lyly's *Campaspe* (1584).

Shapes.

Dreams have peculiar shapes. Dreams seem to take place extraordinarily quickly in waking time but can contain massive, epic and complex actions in that space. A night's dreaming may contain many different dreams but to Freudian analysts the dreams of a night cohere, the separate parts converge, as the separate parts of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* converge and cohere in the play's wholeness.

A Midsummer Night's Dream has a compacted and shapely form but one that is notoriously difficult to unpick and lay out coherently. Formally structured the play seems to draw attention to its own formalism, making its audience aware of its own sequence. The audience's recognition of an actor was used to underline the interconnectedness of a series of roles he performed in a play. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, this possibility has most often been pursued through the potential for doubling Oberon and Theseus, Titania and Hippolyta.

Discussion of this pair of potential doubles is bedevilled by the rules assumed by analysts of the casting of Renaissance plays. Since Theseus and Hippolyta enter in 4.1 immediately on the exit of Oberon and Titania, it is assumed that the double is impossible. But as Stephen Booth comments, its use in Peter Brook's production in 1970 'was so spectacularly workable and so spectacularly successful as to have since become a theatrical fad among less grand companies'.

Brook's interest in the double was seen as a celebration of theatrical virtuously, the 'actors' delight in the quick change as 'apparent triumph at the transparent theatrically of their physically minimal metamorphosis'. But it was also seen as arguing that the scenes in the forest were 'the subconscious experience of the daytime characters'. This coalescence of the two characters dissolves the boundaries between the worlds to a disproportionate extent. It suggests no more than that Theseus metamorphoses into Oberon and then

back into himself; it denies the separate and parallel existence of Oberon's world alongside Theseus' own.

It is significant too that such approaches gives such dominance to Oberon/Theseus. In the theatre the only resistance has been provided by Bill Alexander's production for the RSC in 1986 which turned the play into Hippolyta's dream, a dream in which, on her wedding night, once the fairies had to appear at the end of Act 5, Hippolyta seemed to leave her husband for her fairy lover.

Between 1661 and Frederick Reynold's adaptation in 1816, the theatre history of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is almost entirely one of fragmentation and abbreviation, a continual reflection of the sheer difficulty of assimilating the disparate parts of the text within the narrowing of culture.

David Garrick's first adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Fairies* (1755), cut the text even more savagely. The dignity of high opera meant that the workers were eliminated completely in favour of preserving the action of the lovers and the court, leaving no space for parody so that only two and half lines of Shakespeare's Act 5 remained. Garrick's second attempt to restore *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the stage, in 1763, resulted in a version further adapted by George Colman the Elder when Garrick left for a visit to Europe. This version survived only a single disastrous performance but a reviewer's praise of the fairy action as 'most transcendently beautiful' may have spurred Colmar to salvage something from the wreckage by producing a two-act afterpiece performed only three days later as *The Fairy Tale*. This eliminates the lovers and the court completely to focus on the fairies, leaving only so much of Bottom as was needed to link the fairy plot together.

Date.

A Midsummer Night's Dream was written and first performed in 1595 or 1596. The exact date is unknown and impossible to establish more precisely. Determining whether *A Midsummer Night's Dream* preceded or followed *Romeo and Juliet* is difficult. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s place in the canon does not help very much to determine the date further. To do that editors have relied on supposed allusions in the text. Such allusions have included the bad weather of which Titania speaks so eloquently or the exact identity of someone who might fit 'the death| Of learning, late deceased in beggary' (5.1.52-3).

Much more common have been attempts to fix on the exact date of the first performance of the play by assuming that the play must have been performed at the celebrations for a particular noble wedding and that the play's references to the phases of the moon, describe the exact state of the moon on the night of that performance.

As W.J. Lawrence pointed out in 1922, the first play, rather than masque-like entertainment, certainly written specifically for a wedding celebration was Daniel's pastoral *Hymen's Triumph* 1614. In any case, the play was performed

on the public theatre stage as well and must therefore have been within the normal capabilities of the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

The Text.

A Midsummer Night's Dream presents probably fewer textual problems than any other Shakespeare play published both as a quarto and as a part of the Folio of 1623. It was the first work to be entered for the Fisher whose career as a publisher seems to have been fairly brief. The work was almost certainly printed by Richard Bradock. The only major study of the printing of Q1 argued for setting by formes. No one has yet undertaken a full collation of the extant copies of Q1 in search of press-variants.

There is more than enough evidence to show that the copy for Q1 was autograph foul papers. In other words, Bradock's compositor(s) worked from a manuscript in Shakespeare's hand, effectively his rough draft, while the fair copy made from the draft stayed with the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

Q1's stage directions are both incomplete and inconsistent. It lacks a number of necessary entries and even more exits. Its speech prefixes vary for a number of characters: Robin is sometimes *Puck* and sometimes *Rob* or *Robin*; Titania is often *Que(en)* in Act 5 Theseus and Hippolyta become *Du(ke)* and *Dutch*; Bottom is *Clowne* in 4.1. Entrances often indicate who is included only in a general way: Q1 reads '*Enter the Clownes*' at the beginning of 3.1 and '*Enter Theseus and all his traine*' at 4.1.101.3-4; at the opening of 4.2 the direction '*Enter Quince, Flute, Thisby and the rabbie*' manages both to confuse Flute and his role and to cover Starveling and Snout as 'the rabble'.

Q2. 1619. Though its title-page carries the date 1600 and the name of the printer as 'James Roberts', Q2 belongs to a group of quartos that were printed for William Jaggard in 1619. Q2 is effectively a page-for-page reprint of Q1. Q2 took the opportunity here to restore some the mislined verse. That apart, Q2 repeats numerous errors in Q1. There is nothing in Q2's corrections to suggests that the compositors had any other authority to consult, all its emendations being pretty obvious from the context.

F1. 1623. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* next appeared in the first collected edition of Shakespeare's works, the First Folio of 1623. It was the eighth play in the section devoted to the comedies, occupying pp. 145-62. F1 was set up from a copy of Q2, repeating many of its corrections and errors. The changes are by no means complete enough to suggest anything very systematic in the checking but their source is generally accepted to have been a playhouse prompt-book. Most of these alterations and additions affect stage directions. Many of others are helpful clarifications of stage business. Q had failed to include any entrance for the transformed Bottom at 3.1.97; the Folio not only adds the entrance but specifies the necessary prop: '*Enter Piramus with Asse head*'. But F1's additions are occasionally made without the necessary and corollary deletions: after Quince's prologue, F1 added a direction '*Exit all but Wall*'. At other moments the collator's enthusiasm seems to have got the

better of him: seeing a line of names at 3.1.153, '*Peaseblossome, Cobweb, Moth* and *Mustard-seede*?', he interpreted it as a stage direction, rather than Titania's summoning her four fairies by name; Q's direction '*Enter foure Fairyes*' was incorporated as '*and foure Fairies*', leaving a direction that brings eight fairies on to the stage. Sometimes F1 adds a degree of helpful specificity: for example, '*Manet Lysander and Hermia*' at 1.1.127 after the '*Exeunt*' for Theseus and his court; '*sous*' for Oberon's entry at 3.2.0, removing Q's entrance for Robin with him at this point and putting '*Enter Pucke*' at 3.2.3; '*Quince*' as a marginal addition to explain Q's '*Enter the Prologue*' at 5.1.107.

A further new stage direction may give a slight indication of the period in which this new staging was implemented. At the end of Act 3 F1 includes a direction '*They sleepe all the Act*'.

F1's variants in the dialogue fall into two broad categories: a significant number of new errors of substitution, transposition or misreading which seem likely to have no authority; a small but important group of corrections or alterations which seem to rely on some other authority than the compositor's or editor's ingenuity. If some of these are inadequate corrections they certainly cannot be disregarded. In weighing these, editors have come to treat F1 as an important indicator of new evidence; they have been more reluctant to pay the same serious attention to F1's significant evidence for stage movements even if some of these may have been introduced after Shakespeare's death.